

City Sleuth Citation

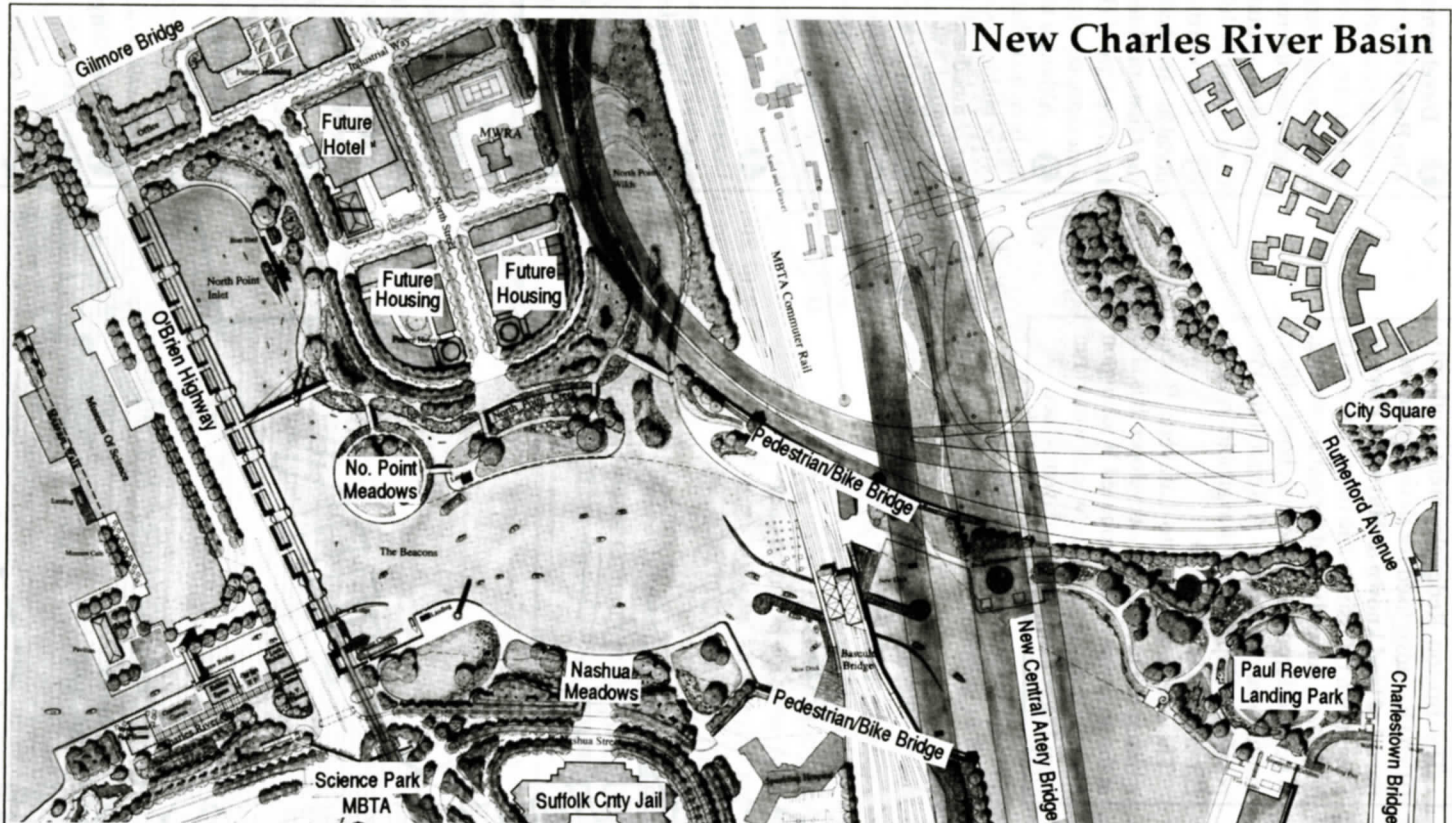
Annual awards on the landscape and cityscape

THE BOSTON INFORMER

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The New Charles River Basin parks are three parks being planned by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) near North Station. The \$80 million parks, funded by the Central Artery/Tunnel project, will refurbish and extend the Esplanade in Boston from Leverett Circle to Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital and create new parks in Cambridge and Charlestown. Part of the project, Paul Revere Landing Park East, No. Point Meadows, Lovejoy Wharf, Historic Dam and Nashua Meadows, will be built before work is begun on the new Charles River bridges. Other elements won't be scheduled until early in the next century, after the Central Artery project is done. The MDC is assisted in project planning by Carr, Lynch, Hack and Sandell, landscape architects. For information, call Karl Haglund, MDC, at 727-5114.

Source: MDC

The North Station-South Station Rail Link Major Investment Study/Environmental Impact Statement/Report will issue a draft for the Citizens Advisory Committee's (CAC) review in April.

The \$4 million Amtrak-funded study will include a range of options to connect North Station and South Station, including a No-Build scenario, lower-cost Transportation Systems Management alternatives and rail. The study is being done by consultants Vanasse Hangen Brustlin/Frederic R. Harris Joint Venture.

Working with the CAC, the consultants are looking at options for the rail alternative, including two tracks or four, two stations or three and a South Station terminus under Dorchester Avenue. Recent discussion has included whether to have a Central Station near Aquarium on the Blue Line. The Central Station has been considered a key element, providing connections to Logan Airport via the Blue Line and much-needed service to the poorly served Financial District.

However, due to many constraints, this station would be very expensive. Options for locations for the two rail platforms were then investigated, trying to provide good downtown distribution by pulling the end stations closer. The South Station rail link platform could be moved under Dorchester Avenue near the Federal Reserve. The North Station platform could shift to New Chardon Street near Haymarket, with Blue Line connections at Government Center made via a people mover or moving sidewalk. Call Clay Schofield, MBTA at 222-4478 for information.

A New City Hall Plaza?

Spearheaded by the public/private Trust for City Hall Plaza, is proceeding apace. According to project director Ann Donner, plans are being developed to reshape and revitalize the cold, dreary expanse, and final proposals will be submitted to Mayor Menino in April.

Ideas floated include:

- reconnecting Hanover Street to Cambridge Street, perhaps as a pedestrian avenue
- a 300-room hotel and parking garage adjacent to the low-rise section of the JFK Building
- expansion of the Government Center MBTA station to become a cityside airport ticketing facility
- a music garden proposed by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, in front of the JFK Building on Cambridge Street and primarily on federal government land

The proposed two-acre music garden would include a year-round greenhouse and cafe and a holographic projector of nature scenes. It would have six sections, each with different varieties of plants and trees.

The City of Boston, bugged for years to make Boston friendlier to cyclists, is creating a **Bicycle Advisory Committee**.

At a public meeting on Feb. 29, over 75 cyclists heard about Boston's seven-point bicycle action agenda and commented on some of their problems getting around Boston on a bicycle. The action agenda includes developing a policy/design document; sponsoring an event during Bike Week in May; creating a pothole repair program; and others.

Candidates for the Advisory Committee will be considered through March 21. Call Vineet Gupta at the Boston Transportation Department, 635-2756, for information.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) has advertised for **development of a parcel of land known as Hayward Place** in Downtown Crossing. The triangular site of 37,000 s.f., currently used for surface parking, is being offered for residential, hotel, office, institutional or retail use. A Request for Proposals development kit is available from the BRA/EDIC at 722-4300.

The site is adjacent to Lafayette Place, which is still in search of a developer. It is also at the terminus of the proposed Washington Street electric trolley bus, which would run from Dudley Square to Lafayette Place.

1 Development activity downtown...
The Board of Trade Building (131 State St.) is being converted into a 110,000 s.f. "extended-stay residence," with about 95 furnished rental apartments, 50 luxury executive suites, and the remainder condominiums or unfinished apartments with one-year leases. Completion by July 1996.

2 The Marriott Vacation Club International has reached tentative agreement to buy the **Custom House Tower** for \$8.2 million from the City of Boston and will convert it to timeshare condominiums.

3 Although the building at **80 Broad St.** has been demolished, a 13-story, 120,000 s.f. office building with ground-floor retail is being planned and designed by Graham Gund Associates. There will be three levels of underground parking. The developer, Suffolk Construction Co., says that the \$24 million project is about a year away from groundbreaking, and construction is expected to take 18-24 months.

4 The 11-story **Compton Building** (161 Devonshire St., between Milk and Franklin streets) will be converted by New York developer Masterworks Development Corp. into a 170-room "club hotel" with below-market rates for business "club" members. The \$15 million project is expected to be completed by 1998.

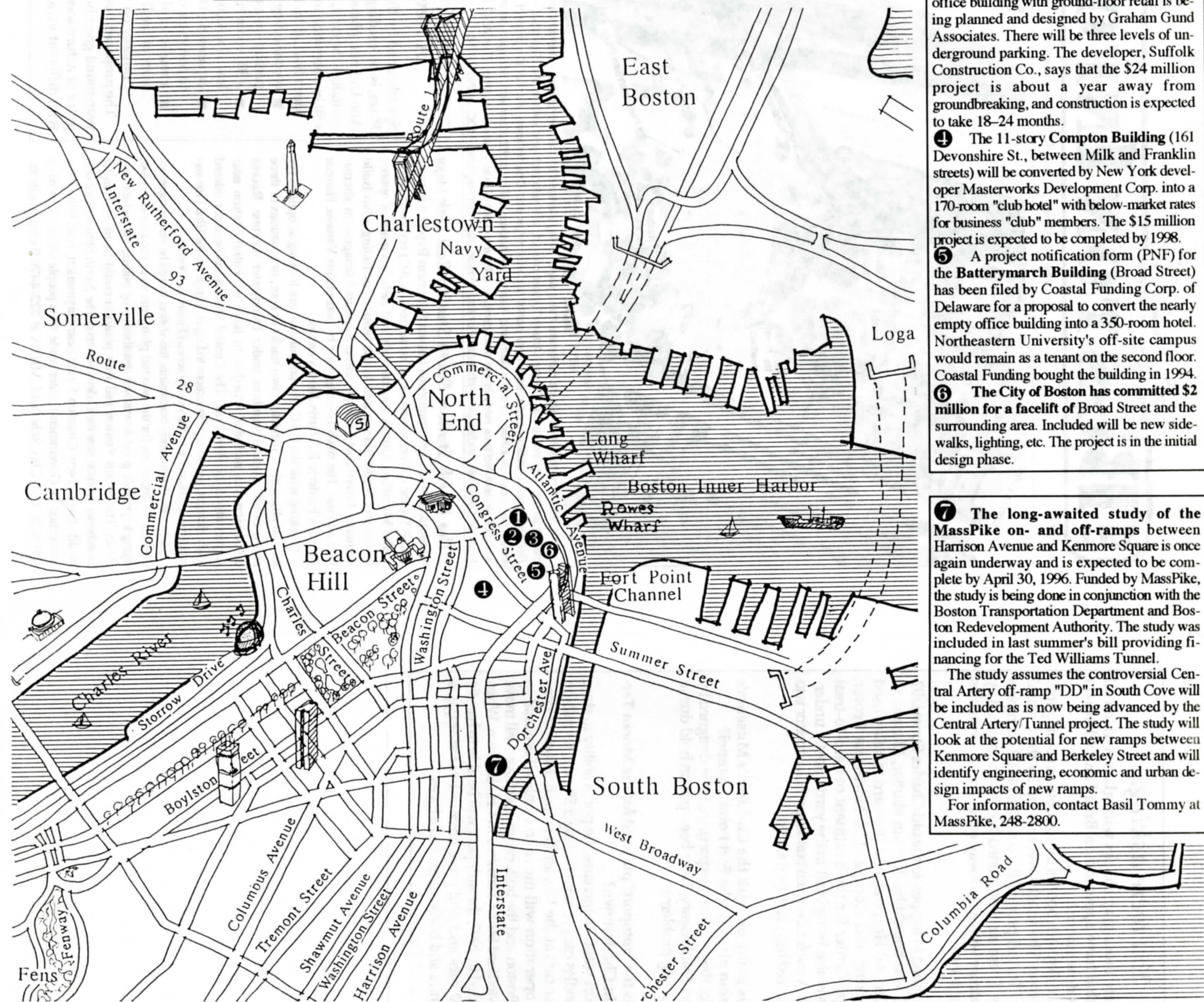
5 A project notification form (PNF) for the **Batterymarch Building** (Broad Street) has been filed by Coastal Funding Corp. of Delaware for a proposal to convert the nearly empty office building into a 350-room hotel. Northeastern University's off-site campus would remain as a tenant on the second floor. Coastal Funding bought the building in 1994.

6 The City of Boston has committed **\$2 million for a facelift of Broad Street** and the surrounding area. Included will be new sidewalks, lighting, etc. The project is in the initial design phase.

7 The long-awaited study of the MassPike on- and off-ramps between Harrison Avenue and Kenmore Square is once again underway and is expected to be complete by April 30, 1996. Funded by MassPike, the study is being done in conjunction with the Boston Transportation Department and Boston Redevelopment Authority. The study was included in last summer's bill providing financing for the Ted Williams Tunnel.

The study assumes the controversial Central Artery off-ramp "DD" in South Cove will be included as is now being advanced by the Central Artery/Tunnel project. The study will look at the potential for new ramps between Kenmore Square and Berkeley Street and will identify engineering, economic and urban design impacts of new ramps.

For information, contact Basil Tommy at MassPike, 248-2800.



The Logan People Mover is on the move. Massport has outlined the study process for this proposed rubber-tire elevated transit system at Logan Airport. Alternatives to be studied include a Blue Line spur, a no-build alternative with alternative-fuel buses serving terminals, and the elevated people mover.

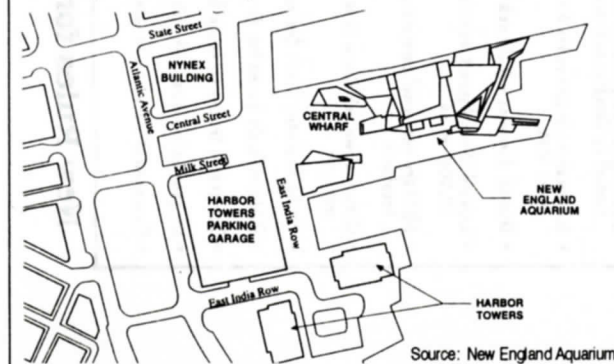
Massport's goal is to double the number of Logan passengers arriving via the Blue Line from 6 percent to 12 percent. However, with Logan's passenger load expecting to go from 24 million to 37 million to 45 million in 2015, the Blue Line would be expected to carry three times today's riders, or 4.5 million riders, to Logan. The capacity of the MBTA system as a whole to do this is being looked into.

The New England Aquarium has issued the Final Project Impact Report (FPIR)/Final Environmental Impact Statement for its proposed \$70 million expansion project at Central Wharf.

Since the Draft PIR/EIR was issued in October 1995, the Aquarium, after negotiations with the Trustees of Harbor Towers, scaled back the proposed decking over the water sheet (in the lagoon between the Aquarium and Harbor Towers) to approximately the original 1960 pier line, before the Aquarium was built. It also moved the proposed theater/auditorium and reduced its size and height.

After approvals, including a Chapter 91 waterways license, construction will be phased over time, with the first phase being the addition of the west wing.

Copies of the FPIR/EIR may be obtained from Earth Tech (508-371-4000).



MBTA Clarendon Plaza busway update: Despite having no funding source identified, the MBTA is pursuing plans to reconstruct and waterproof the busway behind Back Bay station on Clarendon Street in 1996. In a recent meeting with State Representatives, local officials and community leaders, the issue of whether the "temporary" bus Route 39 should layover in the busway was discussed. There is a possibility that the Route 39 bus, replacement for the suspended Arborway streetcar service, might not use the busway in the long term. The route could be changed so the buses unload and load at the Public Library, allowing the plaza to be restored to a more pedestrian-oriented space. Whether this change would wait until the Copley Green Line station is made wheelchair accessible was not discussed, but connecting to an accessible station is the reason the bus serves Back Bay station.

For information, call William Quinlan, MBTA, at 222-3425.

Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

The Boston Informer is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

The Boston Informer is available by mail only. \$20.00 per year (cheap!). Inquiries Questions? Telephone (617) 723-3584.

ZIPPER LANE RULES:

- One occupant or more required (except car carriers)
- Even numbered plates on odd numbered days (except on Tuesdays and rainy afternoons)
- American-made cars in the A.M./foreign-made cars in the P.M.
- Use of dummies not allowed (unless they are driving)
- Leased Urban Assault vehicles with less than 10,000 miles
- Military personnel carriers en route to ordered locations
- Circus clown vehicles with more than 12 clowns in minicar
- Pizza delivery truck trainees
- Public officials timing the 6 mile run
- Ice cream trucks en route to suburban locales
- No passing limousines with state officials
- Government workers who work



New Rules for the Carpool Lane

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You were asking...

- Q. What are those gray shacks with glass with on all sides that have appeared on Broad and Chatham streets downtown?**
- A. They are dispatch booths for tour buses coming into downtown. The shacks were set up by the Central Artery/Tunnel project at a cost of \$14,000 each plus salaries. These air conditioned booths are manned by a dispatcher with a two-way radio who coordinates the tour buses.
- Q. What's going to happen to the old Charles Street jail?**
- A. The jail was bought by its main abutter, Massachusetts General Hospital, and the yard is being used for parking and storage. The Northeast Proton Therapy Center for the treatment of hard-to-treat tumors is also being built in the yard, mostly underground. A use for the main building whose exterior is to be preserved has yet to be decided.
- Q. What is going on with the Children's Museum's expansion plans on the Fort Point Channel?**
- A. Plans for the museum's expansion, to be designed by architect Frank Geary, have been put on hold due to fund-raising problems.
- Q. What is the "autoport" planned for the Moran Terminal in Charlestown?**
- A. Massport wants to increase the port's ability to store and handles cars, so it is creating a 55-acre, \$9 million yard for cars at the Moran Terminal. Moran's container operation will move to Conley Terminal in South Boston and the bulk cargo operation will move to the Medford Street Terminal in Charlestown. When completed in 1997, the autoport will be able to handle 100,000 cars and will have covered car storage, a mechanics and body shop, and offices.

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